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THE DD-EMBLEM OF OSIRIS

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THE EXACT SIGNIFICANCE of the emblem of Osiris, the so-called Dd-emblem, which figures so prominently among the Egyptians as an amulet, has so far escaped a satisfactory answer. In the latest book that touches on this question, the author states in a note (see W. Max Müller, *Egyptian Mythology*, p. 385, note 3), 'it may have been merely an old architectural experiment without any original religious meaning.' The other question which Müller raises, whether the Dd-emblem was originally attached to the city of Busiris, or to the city-god, will find its answer when a correct explanation of what that sign originally represented shall have been given. As long as one considers it to represent a pillar, the possibility of the sign embodying the emblem of the city of Dedu is obvious. This investigation which takes up this question once more, will try to show that the Dd-emblem must be considered as one to which an originally religious meaning was attached, a meaning however which was lost among the Egyptians in a very remote time. From Egypt itself we receive no light which would enable us to get the satisfactory answer. We have to go outside of Egypt, that is to Babylonia to get this information.

To the later Egyptians the Dd-emblem was a sign which commemorated the resurrection of the god Osiris. As an amulet it was considered to procure three things needful to their dead. Placed around the neck of the dead, the deceased person entered through the gates of, and became glorified in, *Duat*, and he was assured of his sustenance in the other world, being given bread, cakes, quantities of flesh on the altars of Re', or as a variant has it, of Osiris the good Being. See the 155th chapter of the Book of the Dead, which deals with the Dd-amulet. The Egyptians themselves held that the Dd-emblem signified or symbolized the backbone of Osiris. Scholars regarded it either as a pillar, or as a representation of the universe—the four horizontal lines representing four worlds placed above each other. Again it was conjectured that it must represent a work-stand upon

which the stone-mason used to lay his tools. Still another interpretation saw in the Dd-emblem either an altar of four altarpates topped in layers, or a nilometer. That view finally, which saw therein a branchless tree-stump, seems to come nearest to a right interpretation. In so far at least as that explanation connected the emblem with a plant, it was, it seems, entirely correct, for we naturally expect that a god such as Osiris, who figures so prominently as a nature-god, or as a vegetation-god, should in some way have as his most fitting emblem some kind of a plant. Plant-life more than any other life also exemplifies best the change in nature. Osiris's chief characteristic was that of a god of the change of nature, probably first only of vegetation and later of the change in nature in the widest sense. To express this in reference to the Sumero-Babylonian mythology, before Osiris became the Egyptian Dumuzu, he must have been an Egyptian Asar. Scholars for quite some time back have pointed out the similarity of the ideographic writing of the names of the Sumerian Asar and the Egyptian Wsr, that is, both containing the sign for 'place' plus the sign for 'eye.' But not only is the ideographic writing the same, but there is also a similarity in pronouncing that ideographic writing, for a gloss gives the cuneiform reading of that sign as *a-sa-ru* (Coptic **ΟΥΡΙΠΕ**). If we would have to stop here with the enumeration of these two identities, we would only be justified in saying that this is a mere accidental coincidence. But we can go farther. Not only are the ideographic writing and the pronunciation the same in both instances, but there is also an agreement in the additional appellations given to both divine names. The Sumerian divine name is always written *dingir* Asar *lù-dug*. Yet *lù-dug* obviously does not belong to the name proper, but is only an appellative, i. e., 'Asar, the good Being.' I wish to point out here, as I have not seen it mentioned in this connection, that the writing of *lù-dug* has its exact equivalent in the by-name of Osiris, *wnn nfrw*, i. e. 'the one who is good,' or 'the good Being,' Coptic **ΟΥΕΝΟΠΕ**.¹ For the repeated occurrence of the

¹ The final *u* in *Wsr wnn nfrw* is due to the fact that the Egyptians regarded this name as a unit, and therefore affixed the *u* so common in the names of Egyptian gods. In the nom. pers. **𐤆𐤍𐤏𐤍** (Lidzbarski, *HNSE* p. 223) the final *u* is dropped, as it is sometimes omitted also in Egyptian inscriptions.

name *Wsr wnn nfrw* see the Book of the Dead, chapters 42, 43, 70, 92, 100, 129, 145, 146 and 155, etc. We have therefore in the Sumerian as well as in the Egyptian nomenclature a complete parallel. Again, when we read for instance passages such as that in chapter 146 of the Book of the Dead, *Wsr wnn nfrw mšc-hrw s3 Gb mš n Nw-t*, we are able to translate this Egyptian sentence back into Sumerian without any change in the personages, namely, *dingir Asar lù-dug dumu dingir Enki-ka-ge u-tu-ud-da dingir Damgalnunna-ge*. The remark which Müller (*Egyptian Mythology*, p. 41) makes concerning Nut, 'We should expect her to be Nun's consort, but she is seldom associated with him . . . she is, instead, the wife of the earth-god, by whom she gives birth to the sun each morning,' holds good also of Damgalnunna, who instead of being associated with Nun, is the wife of the original Sumerian earth-god Enki. Both therefore, Asar and Wsr, have as their father the earth-god and as their mother the female counterpart of the abyss. The identities in name and parentage will allow us also some important conclusions as to the respective emblems of Asar and Wsr later on.

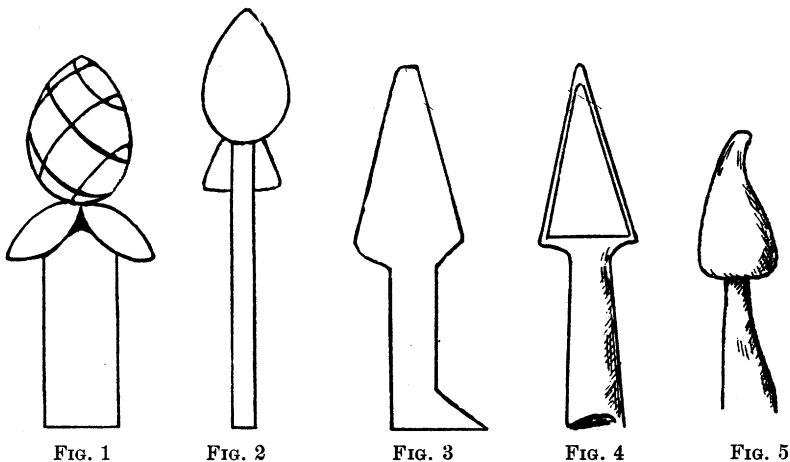
Before doing this however, I wish briefly to sketch what the inscriptions say of this interesting divinity Asar. In bilingual inscriptions this god is identified with Marduk. The identification of these undoubtedly different gods must belong to the time when the sun-worship was changed from the autumnal to the vernal equinox. To express this historically is not easy at present, but it may be possible that the beginning of the astronomical spring as the probable commencement of the year may perhaps reach as far back as the time of the kings of Ur. That Asar originally was a sun-god who represented the winter-, or autumn-sun, seems to be implied in such passages as Reissner, Hymn No. 1, lines 25 and 29, in which passages it is said of Asar: *enim dingir Asar lù-dug šel pa-še-ba mu-(ni-ib-su-sug)*, which the Semitic translates: *amât iluMarduk ebura ina si(manišu úṭabbi)*, i. e., 'The word Asar, the good Being, floods the harvest with its ripe field-products.' There is obviously a contradiction in the statement of this hymn. How is it possible to call a divinity a good Being, who is instrumental in ruining the crops of the harvest-fields? Now line 29 of the same hymn reads: *enim dingir Asar lù-dug gal-dug a-maḥ-am kar (alšaša)*, with Semitic rendering: *amât iluMarduk butuktum ša k(âra iḥa-*

šaš), that is, 'the word of Asar, the good Being, is a flood which tears away the dike.' These two lines show that Asar was a sun-god of the winter time. But it also shows that Asar, to be true to his appellation, the good Being, must have come from a country where the autumnal equinox was beneficial to the land. This was not the case in Babylonia. Here Asar, no longer a good god, would become a god of destruction, if he remained a sun-god of the autumnal equinox. He therefore changed to a sun-god of the vernal equinox, but when this change took place, it seems also a slight change in his name was made at the same time. Asar was henceforth called Marduk. In the name Marduk itself we still can recognize the old appellation of Asar; *lù-dug*, for the syllable *mar* in Marduk contains probably the *lù* in *lù-dug*, as *lù* could also be pronounced *mulu*, which passed into *muru*, *mur* and thence into *mar*. The *duk* is clearly recognizable as standing for the Sumerian *dug*. If it is true that Marduk stands for *mulu-dug* or *lù-dug*, then the attribute of Asar has survived in this name. In this case we are not even compelled to suppose that a merging of two different gods has taken place.

Prof. M. Jastrow in a recent article ('Sumerian and Akkadian Views of Beginnings,' *JAOS* 36. 277) sees in the story of Marduk's conquest of Tiamat an original nature-myth, which presented the story of the change of season from the winter or rainy season to the spring season. For the Sumerian view of yearly orientation, as must have been held originally by these people, it is interesting to note in this connection what the author says on p. 293. I shall give the passage in his own words: 'The world . . . is pictured as beginning in the fall when the rains set in, and not in the spring when the storms and rains cease. Such a condition is apt to prevail in mountainous districts where the streams are low or entirely dried up in the dry season and depend upon the rains to fill them again, in contrast to a mountainless plain like the Euphrates Valley, where the streams, fed from their sources, flow in abundance during the entire year and during the rainy season over-flow and cause inundations.' In view of the fact that creation falls in the winter season, this fact in itself justifies us in concluding that the Sumerian year originally began in that season.

Asar is most commonly known to us as a god who shows his kindness (*lù-dug*) toward suffering mankind and who relieves

them of their diseases and the attacks of evil spirits. The standing phrase in incantation texts: 'Asar, the good Being, saw him and unto the house of his father Enki he entered,' seems to have some reference to his ideogram which contains the sign *igi*, 'eye.' Originally it seems the ideogram had reference only to the 'place of the eye,' that is, 'the sun's eye,' that is, the sun. The sun-god sees everything and therefore knows all things, and as the power of light is also the power of goodness and every blessing and the enemy of darkness and all evil spirits that roam in darkness. In Tablet iii of the *utukki limnûti* series Asar is therefore called a



god that blesses = *dingir silim-ma-mu dingir Asar lû-dug*, cf. *CT* 16, pl. viii. But as a sun-god Asar is also a god who affects nature, and, from the passage quoted from the hymn published by Reissner, it can be gathered that Asar was in some way connected with irrigation and vegetation. The most evident proof that Asar was originally a vegetation-god is given us in the initial lines of the seventh tablet of Creation. The two lines that interest us here only are as follows: *ilû Asar-ri ša-riq mi-riš- (ti mu-kin iz-ra-ti) ba-nu-û še-am u ki-e mu-š(e-ši ur-qi-ti)* = 'O Asar, bestower of planting, founder of sowing, maker of grain and plants, who caused the green herb to come forth.'² It is

² Cf. also King, *Magic*, No. 12, line 30: *ha-a-a-ad ilû Aš-na-an û ilû La-har(?) ba-nu-û še-am û ki-e mu-diš-šu-û šammurqîtu*, 'who bestows corn and grain (?) who creates wheat and barley, who renews the green herb.'

therefore not merely accidental but only shows more clearly that Asar was a vegetation-god when in the rock-relief of Sanherib near Bavian this Assyrian representation which pictures the different emblems of the twelve great gods, has the form as in Figure 1, that is a plant, most probably, to judge from the figure, a conventionalized picture of the most valued plant in old Babylonia, a young palm-tree. This sign was however generally explained as being the 'spear-head' of Marduk and therefore symbolizing the *kakku*, the weapon of Marduk. On the Asarhaddon stele of Sendschirli this emblem of Marduk has the form as in Figure 2, which of all other representations of the emblem comes closest to that of Sanherib. The emblem on the Sargon stele of Cyprus, which equals the one given in the rock-relief of Asarhaddon at Nahr el Kelb, varies somewhat (see Fig. 3). Finally on the Cassite boundary-stones we have forms as in Figures 4 and 5 (see Hinke, *A New Boundary Stone*, pp. 91 and 94). K. Franck, *Bilder und Symbole babylonisch-assyrischer Götter*, pp. 22-24, is inclined to see in these representations the weapon of Marduk, a lance.

Of all the representations given, it is advisable to pay most attention to the one which is obviously the best. That is undoubtedly the one on the rock-relief of Sanherib near Bavian. This seems to come nearer to a tree than a lance or a spear-head. But also in each of the other cases there is nothing which would hinder us from seeing the picture of a tree in them. Compare for instance the hieroglyph of the *im* tree which is used as the determinative for trees in general.

Before we go on it is necessary to clear up a certain misunderstanding. This has reference to the so-called 'weapons' of the gods. Here we have not to think of real weapons, say a spear, a lance, a bow, but simply of the divine emblem. III Raw. 69. 3. 75-83 gives a list of such emblems of gods. It is interesting to note that a few of the names of the so-called weapons stand in etymological relation to plants. The *kakku* of Ninib is called *hihinu*, which is related to *hahin* = thornbush. The *kakku* of Nabu is the *it-ti-it-tum*, which is related to *etidu* = nettle. Another *kakku* is named *pu-qut-(tum)*, which equals *puqdatu* or *puquattu* of similar meaning. Of interest to us here is the name of the *kakku* of Marduk. It is called in this list *qa-qu-ul-tu*. Hinke did not recognize in this connection that also this

word is etymologically connected with the name of a plant. He referred to *CT* 17, 35, 79 where we have *qaq-qul-ti la pa-te-e* = 'a closed vessel,' but otherwise left the connection with other words unexplained. But *qaqultu* is surely related to *qaqul(l)u*. Meissner in *ZA* 6. 293 identified *qaqulum* with the Syriac *kâkôlâ* = amomum cardamomum, Löw n. 296. *Qaqulum* equals *mangu* and *šameṭu*. If *mangu* has any relation to *mangagu*, this would fit into our thesis most perfectly, as we know that the latter represents some part of the date-palm. Such a connection between *mangu* and *mangagu* is possible, but cannot be proved now.³ For our purpose suffice it to say that the *kakku* of Marduk is called *qaqultu*, which word is related to a plant-name, a plant which by its equation with others may have some reference to the palm-tree or a part thereof. On the other hand the custom of calling certain plants *kakkê ša ilâni* points to the fact that by that expression the Babylonians did not primarily mean the weapons of the gods, but their emblems. Weapons are not made of wood or of plants, but either of stone or else of metal. That *kakku* stands for emblem is further shown in those cases where certain stars are spoken of as being the *kakku* of the gods. For the use of *kakku* as weapon as well as emblem, or coat-of-arms, compare here the relation of the German words 'Waffen' and 'Wappen.' Marduk's weapon with which he slew Tiamat was the *miṭṭu*. But he also is equipped with the bow (*qaštu*) and the *mulmullu* weapon, which is either a lance or an arrow, more probably the former. We have here our choice to determine which weapon was Marduk's weapon in particular. Perhaps after all none was his particular weapon at all, but only one object was his emblem. This emblem of Marduk was the *qaqultu*-plant. Although preserved to us from a later time, this emblem must be very old, it must have come down from a time in which Marduk must have been held in greater esteem as a god connected with vegetation than he seems to have been in later times. I can only think in this connection of the possi-

³ *Mangagu* apparently represents the diminutive of *mangu*. Cf. Assyrian *sûqu* = *suqâqu* 'a small street.' For other instances of the usage to express the diminutive consonantically through reduplication, compare Neo-Hebrew *besalsûl*, 'a little onion' (Siegfr. §53) and Syriac *partûtâ*, 'bread-crumb' (Nöldeke §122). Cf. also *adâmdâm* 'a little red, pink.'

bility that the emblem was originally that of Asar, and that in the time of the complete merging of these divinities Marduk took this emblem to himself.

If this was the case, it would then seem most plausible, in view of the identity of the names of Asar and Wsr and their identical meaning (*lù-dug, wnn nfrw*) that we may conjecture that both gods had at some time also the same emblem. And indeed it does not require a great stretch of imagination to see in the Dd sign either a corruption, on account of later misunderstand-

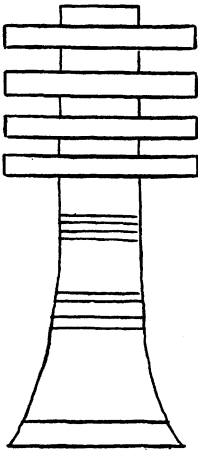


FIG. 6

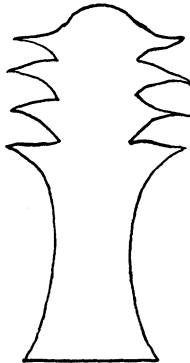


FIG. 7

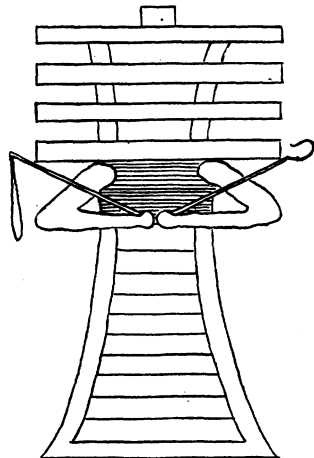


FIG. 8

ing, of the original as given us in Figure 1, or else that it pictured the palm-tree, if the qaqltu should be such, which might have been simplified to the sign in Figure 6, four horizontal lines representing originally probably four rows of palm-leaves. It is strange that as late as the 25th Dynasty there appears a new hieroglyphic form of the Dd sign (see Fig. 7), which speaks favorably for our view that the Dd-emblem of Osiris is a palm-tree.

The picture of Osiris (Fig. 8) which was taken to be 'Osiris in his pillar' is therefore to be placed in the same category as all those pictures, which show Osiris hidden or standing in a tree. However, it is very doubtful whether the oldest representation signified the celestial tree. There was most probably no cosmo-

gonic conception at all contained in this picture, but it simply stood for the original conception of Osiris as being a vegetation-god in Busiris. The custom of planting 365 trees, as it is said, around certain of his temples is also significant. This custom shows Osiris as the god of changing time and of the year,⁴ but here also the tree as the emblem of Osiris crops out again.

If we admit that there is a striking similarity between the Sumerian Asar and the Egyptian Wsr, this admission may perhaps lead to an interesting question as to how far the so-called 'Southern' elements in the Osiris-myth have any connection with the interesting figure of Asar, of whom we have not yet sufficient cuneiform material to draw upon more fully. But suffice it to say at present that the 'Southern' elements in the Osiris legend may not be due to a later confusion at all, a confusion which was brought about through a Southern deity of similar attributes to those of Osiris, but that Osiris himself may have changed from a 'Southerner' to a 'Northern Semito-Libyan' deity, or to express it in other words, Osiris seems to have been first an Asar *lù-dug*, and later developed into a Tammuz. I do not thereby wish to give the impression that the Asar myth was the original one and was borrowed by the Egyptians from the Sumerians. It is more probable that the Sumerians as well as the Egyptians got this mythological figure from a third source.⁵

⁴ The Osirian cycle offers in the story of the slaying of the serpent Apop-Tiamat at the new-year's day another instance which connects Osiris with Asar -lù-dug. Cf. *Sitzungsberichte* of the Berlin Academy, 47, 1910, p. 932 ff. and Müller, *Mythology*, p. 106.

⁵ The name Asar is not Sumerian and neither is Wsr Egyptian. But Asar may well be the name of a West-Semitic deity. I think it is possible to show that there is a strong probability that the original home of Asar was Amurru.

Asar is the masc. counterpart of *Aštar*, *Ištar*, which latter forms exhibit the infixed fem. *t*. Later when this infixed fem. was no more understood as such, a second feminine mark was suffixed, *Astartu*, ph. 'štrt, e.g. '(e)stirati 'Αστартη. South Arabian retains the original form عشتار Asar therefore is عشتار. In connecting Asar with *Ištar*, as must be done, it is easy to understand the nature of this god. Like *Ištar*, out of which Asar developed and became differentiated, he was originally, because being at some time identical with her, a god of love and fertility. Since their differentiation, however, the male divinity was no more brought into sexual

In the same way as Asar the son of Enki is the creator of the world, which position Marduk took over at the time of the merging of these two divinities, we should also expect that Osiris the son of Geb figured originally in the same capacity. And indeed the Egyptian inscriptions are not entirely silent on this matter. There lingered on into the time of the 18th Dynasty the idea of Osiris as creator, which found expression in a hymn to Osiris (cf. Chabas, 'Hymne à Osiris,' in *Revue Archéologique*, 14^e année, 1857, pp. 65 ff.). Osiris is spoken of in the following words: *ir-nf t₃ pn m ʿ-f mw-f t₃w-f śm-f mnmnt-f nb-t pjjt nb-t hnn nb-t ḡdfwt-f ʿwt-f*, i. e. 'he made this earth with his hand, its water, its air, its plants, all its cattle, all flying birds, its reptiles, its quadrupeds.' Wiedemann, in *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. 213, remarks on this passage that the hymn 'thus (is) assigning to him (Osiris) the same work which according to the usual acception had been carried out by Râ, and (is) placing him in a position which is not in logical harmony with that which he occupies in the myth.' This position of Osiris is easily explained as being due to the fact that Osiris is a composite character, an Asar lû-dug as well as a Tammuz.

relations, but his nature was enlarged into a god of goodness in general and of fertility in the whole realm of nature. Hence his epithet 'the good Being.'